addition, ONGC holds two blocks, namely KK-DWN-2000/2 and KK-DWN-2000/4, in this deep water area under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) wherein it carried out about 6,000 LK each of 2-D seismic, gravity and magnetic surveys.

Decanalising import of Petroleum Products

717. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to decanalise import of Petroleum Products;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) whether these imports will jeopardize the existing refineries in the country and whether Government are planning for such contingencies as well if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The policy regarding import of petroleum products is covered within the Exim Policy 2002-2007. However, imports of petroleum products like Motor Sprit (MS), High Speed Diesel (HSD), Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), Light Diesel Oil (LDO) etc. are allowed through Indian Oil Corporation Limited as State Trading Enterprise subject to para 2.11 of Exim Policy. The Director General of Foreign Trade may grant a licence/certificate/permission to any other person to import any of these products.

(c) Imports of petroleum products *inter-alia* depend on domestic demand, duty structure that would impact on import and export possibilities, refining margin and export potential for the products. The refining sector has been delicenced since June, 1998 and, as such, the indigenous production of petroleum products, in excess of the domestic demand, would need to be exported. To the extent imports of products materialise, exports would be higher.

Bidding for HPCL

718. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the reason for Government's proposal to give HPCL's Bhatinda

Refinery to ONGC or any other organization;

(b) whether Government are bringing down its share to 15 per cent;

(c) the reasons for Government not allowing ONGC to bid for HPCL; and

(d) whether it is a fact that large number of people bid for HPCL, so that Government gets better price for HPCL sale?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) Government have decided that implementation of the Bhatinda Refinery be left to the new management of HPCL post-disinvestment or Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas may take up its implementation through ONGC or any other agency so that the project is completed.

(b) Government have decided to bring down its equity share in HPCL to 12%.

(c) Government has decided in September, 2002 not to allow one Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) to bid for another PSU as a matter of policy as this does not meet the objective of disinvestment. Accordingly, ONGC has not been permitted to bid for HPCL.

(d) Bidding process for HPCL is still underway. Government would like to have a keen competition amongst the bidders to get a good price through strategic sale.

Oil Exploration Projects with Iran

719. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ONGC Videsh, IOC and Oil India have signed an agreement with Iran for exploration and production sharing contract with the National Iranian Oil Company for the Fansi oil fields in Iran; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) A consortium of Indian companies, namely, ONGC-Videsh Limited (OVL),